

This is a beautiful story about Sheikh Jalaluddin Haqqani (May Allah Protect Him)

Jalal al-Din Haqqani, a Legend in the History of the Afghanistan Jihad

By Mustafa Hamed

Part 1

Maulavi Jalaluddin Haqqani is regarded as one of the most prominent figures of the both the period of Jihad against the communists and the Soviet invasion (1978 – 1992). Maulavi Haqqani belongs to the Zadran tribe, one of the main tribes in Paktia province, adjacent to Pakistan.

As is well-known, he received his education in the religious schools in Afghanistan, as is case with most the leaders of Jihad in its past and present stages, completing his learning in the al-Haqqani madrasa in Akurah Khatik in the tribal border region with Pakistan. He then worked as a teacher in the same madrasa for a year before he entered permanently into the Jihadist effort in the provinces of Paktia and Paktika. Maulavi Haqqani remains immersed with great effectiveness in the fighting against the Americans and their allies in Afghanistan.

This is the first installment regarding that Jihadist luminary whose story represents a peerless Jihadist legend. This installment uses real-life stories, based on the accounts of his closest friends, students and brothers in Jihad. I had been gathering material on the beginnings of Jihad in Afghanistan in the period after the communist coup (April 1978) and, at the beginning of 1983, finished writing a small book that has not yet been published. I drafted a number of titles for it before settling on “Highlights of the First Year”.

The theme of the book was the beginnings of the Jihad in that period, considered to be among the strangest in the history of Afghanistan, but for which, unfortunately, not much has been done to document. Thus our glorious Islamic history has been obliterated and the mission of writing and commenting upon it has been left to our enemies!! Our Ummah has thereby lost its history and is living without a memory, and our generations are being raised on the poisonous excretions of the culture of our enemies.

This installment is a part of that book.

I became acquainted with Maulavi Haqqani in June of 1979 a few months before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and later I accompanied him during my poor participation in the Afghanistan Jihad until the conquest of Girdiz in April 1992 and the conquest of Kabul a few days later. During that time, I followed many of the conquests of that great Mujahid. I grasped many of the aspects of majesty in his personality as a model for the great scholars (Ulema) of Afghanistan and students of the knowledge of the pure Mujahideen, who now stand as an impregnable bulwark against the largest crusader attack upon the Islamic Ummah across the entire globe and upon its most inaccessible fortress – Afghanistan.

“Highlights of the First Year”

After prayer on the morning of the first day of the Taraki rule, many of the men of the Hay al-Muhajareen Mosque in the Pakistani border city of Miranshah gathered to discuss in great earnest yesterday's events in Kabul. All of them were emigrants who had fled the violence of the Daoud regime, which had swept away the king and declared a republic supported by the Marxist parties. Those men were among the minority of the people which had opposed that regime in parts of the country, but the majority of public abandoned them and chose to make peace with the regime, maybe – possibly.

Those men tried to declare Jihad against the Daoud regime, but they did not receive sufficient support from the people. Eventually the truth of their views became confirmed, but only a while had passed and the Muslims had already paid a huge price as a result of their negligence in carrying out their duty at the right time. In the Muhajireen Mosque, after events revealed the regime's ugly face, that group saw the need to embark once again on Jihad against the communist regime.

Right away, they made the decision to travel to the city of Peshawar where were living some of the Islamic leaders who had previously fled from the injustice of the successive governments in Kabul which attacked the Islamists. They decided to seek from those leaders the immediate declaration of Jihad against the infidel government.

In Peshawar, throughout many hours both day and night, the discussions went on and opinions became divided. The first group of Mujahedeen from the Daoud era believed that the Ulema should head immediately to Afghanistan and make contact with the people and residents of their respective districts to incite them to Jihad and lead them in this venture.

Another group opposed this opinion under the excuse that confronting huge government forces armed with modern weapons and equipment was tantamount to suicide and throwing oneself to destruction, which was not permissible under Shari'a. Rather, a large force equipped with heavy and light weapons must first be gathered together then launched to liberate the country. The funds necessary to implement this plan could be obtained from Islamic countries, especially the petroleum states, for those states would understand completely the danger posed to their own interests by the Marxist coup in Afghanistan. This party optimistically supported their point of view by saying that the West, which had prepared armies and equipment to confront the communists, would not hesitate to send weapons and money to support fighters against the communist regime in Kabul.

Those who spoke of the necessity of immediately launching Jihad insisted upon their position of immediately heading to the field of battle for a number of reasons:

First, the arguments of the first group would waste time while achieving nothing. During the time lost in gathering money and convincing states to support the Mujahedeen, the communists would be able to shore up their rule and destroy completely any possibility of resistance.

Second, the commitment of Islamic states to assist those hostile to the Kabul regime was not guaranteed and of dubious benefit.

Third, no matter how long it takes, they would not be able to equip a force that would match or even come close to the strength of the Afghan Army which gets whatever weapons and ammunition it wants from the Soviet arsenal.

In Peshawar, divisions flared up and an agreement became impossible, as each party set out to implement what it saw as the correct way.

The “Assistance First” party set out for the petroleum countries and the countries of the west requesting aid, while the “Jihad Now” party traveled to inside Afghanistan to begin from there.

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Sheikh Jalaluddin Haqqani returned from Peshawar and its fruitless discussions to his house in Miranshah and the people, muhajireen and adherents of the old Jihad against the rule of Daoud. He declared Jihad again and surrounded himself with a number of those who previously waged Jihad against the rule of Daoud, including Maulavi Mahmud Lala, the old Mujahid who was more than 70 years old but still possessed crushing strength and a body that was harder than rock. With him were the young Maulavi Ahmad Gul, the pious worshipper, and four young students of knowledge. They all gathered their wealth and sold their worldly goods, leaving their families without money, buying instead ammunition and rations. Since the days of the Jihad against the Daoud regime, they had possessed seven old English rifles, taken as booty in the Afghan war against the English, and they purchased a decrepit mule on which they loaded their baggage.

The seven men crossed the mountain paths into Paktia province where they lived the toughest Afghan tribes who had taught bitter lessons to previous British expeditions.

Jalaluddin settled in the mountain canyons and contacted his people in Zadran. A delegation from the mountain villages reached him secretly, telling him that government forces had come and burned down his home and the home of his relatives and that tanks had arrived in the village, terrorizing the people. The government had warned the residents that any attempt at rebellion would be met with maximum force. The people were frightened and convinced that their rifles would be useless against government tanks and MiG aircraft which swept the skies of the region repeatedly every day.

They gave Jalaluddin and his group some food, apologizing for their inability to help them further, and then returned to whence they came.

This meeting was frustrating to the hopes and the determination of the most courageous men. By morning, the government had learned of the presence of Jalaluddin and his group and sent a number of squads to sweep the mountains and increased the aircraft operations in the skies over the region. Jalaluddin and his men fell back to the trackless mountains. Their food was on the point of running out and their mule was near death from exhaustion and the difficulty of the road.

In the evening they sat down to consult with each other. They lit a fire, and Jalaluddin was exhausted and hungry but he was tough. He and his hungry, tired, hunted companions would not yield. The cold of the mountains penetrated their bones. He was commander of the caravan and it was up to him to decide and make clear to them how they had to act.

At this moment crucial moment, Jalaluddin said to them:

“We will wage Jihad fi Sabeel Allah, even if all people forsake us. There is no victory except from Allah. We do not fear the Afghan army. Allah said to us ‘It is Allah Whom you should more justly fear, if ye believe’. We seven individuals are facing an army of eighty thousand but Allah said, ‘How oft, by Allah’s will, has a small force vanquished a big one’. We have an example in the victory given by Allah, SubhanahuwTa’ala, to the Believers over Goliath and his huge armies, and the victory given by the Almighty to Moses and his lowly people over the pharaoh and his vast army. All of remember the events of the battle of Badr and the aid Allah gave to his noble Messenger and his companions. For those who desire the ease of this world, let him return to his family and live content, if he so wants, in the lowliness of exile and under the subjugation of infidels. Whoever desires martyrdom let him stay with me. For tomorrow after dawn prayer, we attack the government garrison in the valley. Let Allah judge the matter that has been done”.

Tears flowed from the eyes of the men and, one after another, they purified themselves in a nearby stream whose clear waters flowed from the heart of the mountains. And they remained in prayer until midnight. For the morning was their appointment with martyrdom.

The men finished the dawn prayer and each took up his rifle, inspected it quickly, and placed a cartridge belt upon his shoulders. Jalaluddin, wearing a smile that illuminated his face, whispered “Allah, O wind of paradise”.

The men smiled and prepared to depart. Jalaluddin raised his arm to heaven and his men gathered about him, saying Amen to his prayer as his eyes filled with tears and he recited the prayer that the Messenger of Allah used to recite before the beginning of battle. He wiped his beard after they finished prayer, and gave the order to move out. The seven men dispersed among the rocks like moths or seven lovers overcome by an excruciating desire and approached to within 200 meters of the camp.

Jalaluddin ordered the one of his men with the strongest voice to call upon the soldiers of the camp to surrender and join the camp of the Muslims - for this was the guidance of the Messenger to his soldiers before war.

The man stood and in his loudest voice called to the soldiers, explaining the unbelief of the government and the prohibition against aiding them to kill Muslims and destroy their homes. He had not finished his message when it was answered from inside the camp by the abominable cry “hurrah”, which was the war cry of the communists. This was followed by automatic weapon fire.

Jalaluddin cried “Allahu Akbar”, calling his men to battle. The exchange of gunfire continued incessantly: seven antique rifles, relics of the past century, against automatic weapons firing hundreds of rounds each minute.

It was clear that there was no hope and that what was unfolding was madness itself. But two hours after the battle began, the government garrison stopped firing. The Mujahedeen therefore ceased their assault in order to reconnoiter the situation. The voices of the soldiers then called out asking them to cease fire because they surrendered.

The soldiers of the garrison emerged from their positions shouting “Allahu Akbar” and dragging the corpse of a man by his feet – he was their Khalqi leader, a member of the communist Khalq party. One of the soldiers had shot and killed him, and the entire unit joined the Mujahedeen. Not one the Mujahedeen was wounded or martyred.

Paktia and the entire southern region were shaken by the news which was circulating around the mountain peaks. Dozens of young men from the tribes joined Jalaluddin and food and clothing poured in from the tribes of the south. Within two days following the battle, it became clear that resistance was possible.

However, a troublesome question kept everyone awake at night: what if the tanks come? This question continued to trouble the minds of everyone although they did not reveal this to their leader Jalaluddin.

The rifles and machine guns they had captured would not penetrate these steel beasts...so what to do?

The question did not long remain. The government decided the matter by sending a large force of infantry and tanks to chastise the entire region. News reached Jalaluddin that a government force had left the provincial capital and was on its way to them.

Many felt confusion. Some felt fear, especially those who had witnessed these beasts demolishing nearby villages. The people gathered to Jalaluddin to seek his opinion on this dilemma, and the men found him calmly smiling as he came out for prayer. So he made fun of them saying: “Perhaps you are frightened because the tanks are coming?” They answered, “Yes, we don’t have the strength to fight tanks, and we have no weapons that penetrate them.” He asked them, smiling, “Who is more powerful: Allah the Creator of heaven and earth or tanks? The people were surprised by the question of the revered scholar and they answered without hesitation, “Allah, SubhanahuTa’ala”. And he said kindly but firmly, “All who believe that truthfully is a believer of the truth faith, if we are not victorious, we have gained that which is better than victory, we have gained martyrdom and the company of the His noble Messenger and his Companions in Paradise. For he who would love to obtain this honor, let him come with me. I go to await the tanks at the mountain pass.”

Radical Transformation

Fifty men set out with Jalaluddin for the mountain pass, some of them carrying automatic weapons. Thus for the first time the Bedu of those mountains carried automatic weapons. Jalaluddin smiled as he thought about this novelty and he murmured in the ear of his comrade, the old Mujahad Mahmud Lala saying, “This is from the blessings of Jihad, Sheikh Mahmud.” And Sheikh Mahmud laughed with all his heart.

Jalaluddin stopped, standing upright in the middle of the mountain corridor which was crossed by a level but unpaved road. He then turned to face his men and said, “If we are faithful, here the angels will descend upon us”. He raised his hand to heaven in a humble prayer to Allah, beseeching Him for victory over their enemies or martyrdom in His cause. Sheikh Mahmud broke into tears with loud sobs as he remembered his 70 years without earning a meeting with the Beloved Ones.

The men dispersed to positions among the rocky peaks and as the morning lengthened, there came from afar the rumbling noise of the metal beasts. The first tank had just entered the mouth of the pass to cross it when there came cries of "Allahu Akbar" and bullets of the Mujahedeen poured upon the steel beasts. The heavy machine guns of those tanks which had not yet entered the pass opened fire on the heights in order to suppress the fire of the Mujahedeen. In the midst of the din of machine gun fire and spraying rock, the sound of a terrible explosion reverberated around the entrance to the pass. All were stupefied as they watched the first tank explode and pieces of it scatter in the air. Ahmad Gul brandished his ancient rifle and cried, "Allahu Akbar. The victory and triumph of Allah has come".

Then a round struck a fuel truck outside the pass and it set alight and soon exploded. Its wreckage scattered and the ammunition and shells it carried caused great destruction. Then something occurred that had not been taken into consideration: the soldiers jumped from their tanks, leaving them inside and outside the pass, and the movement of the entire military force stopped completely.

At the end of the battle, one of tank commanders who had been taken prisoner told them that they thought the Mujahedeen had struck the first tank with a rocket, frightening the soldiers trapped inside their tanks between the walls of the pass. So they opened the hatches of the tanks and jumped out, taking up positions behind the rocks to exchange fire with the Mujahedeen. This was a golden opportunity for the Mujahedeen to pick off the soldiers one by one, for they were by nature skilled sharpshooters.

The attack collapsed completely and the Mujahedeen took as booty a large amount of automatic rifles, medium machine guns, transport vehicles and tanks. More important than any of this was the acquisition of RPG-7 anti-armor grenades. This was a radical transformation in the course of the fighting in that region. After that battle, the tanks no longer excited terror and the Mujahedeen became more proficient and capable of opposing armored assaults.

On the road, old Sheikh Mahmud Lala whispered in the ear of Jalal al-Din, "Tell me Jalal al-Din, what happened to that tank in the front?" Jalal al-Din answered him gravely as he was lost in thought, "Subhan Allah Sheikh Mahmud, did I not tell you these were the blessings of Jihad. Allah aids those who aid Him."

News flew from Paktia to Ghazny and all the south of the victory of the Mujahedeen, and riders among the wild mountain trails circulated the story that angels had come down from heaven to aid the Mujahedeen. And so the spirit of Jihad was ignited in the heart of the mountains.

The news of the victories of the Mujahedeen reached the army camps, and the soldiers themselves circulated these same stories about the angels descending from heaven to help the Mujahedeen. This awakened their religious feelings and there occurred repeatedly cases of government soldiers fleeing with their weapons and joining the Mujahedeen or even more: some of them had opened fire on communist officers and there were increasing cases where entire military units surrendered after a short battle that had been pre-arranged with the Mujahedeen to give them the opportunity to assassinate their military leaders and political officials.

In Paktia, during the first year alone, the entire province was liberated with the exception of its capital Gardiz and its major city Khost, as well as a number of strongholds which relied increasingly upon helicopters to deliver supplies. Scattered across the surface of the main roads were the wrecks of dozens of

destroyed and burned-out tanks and trucks. The booty provided the Mujahedeen with modern weapons, including artillery pieces, mortars and a quantity of serviceable tanks. In sum, their military force numbered a thousand while the strength of their morale reached a level impossible to imagine or describe.

The Martyrdom of Sheikh Mahmud Lala

Some months after the last battle, the old MujahadMaulavi Mahmud Lala was leading afternoon prayer on the mountain top. With his impressive stature, he was standing for prayer between the hands of Allah when a number of helicopters appeared to raid the position. The gigantic man paid no heed to the odious noise coming from the helicopter machine guns. A round from the shower of machine gun fire struck the head of the elderly man and the body of the Shamikh fell with his blood staining the rocks of the mountains he loved and which loved him. The spirit soared with the dear one to the place where the Beloved Ones awaited him.

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The locations and details differed, but what happened in Paktia at the hands of Jalaluddin and his six men with their ancient rifles and their broken-down mule, was repeated in Jalalabad at the hands of Maulavi Mohamed YunisKhales, a sheikh who was more than sixty years old. With him were his students who had received at his hands their learning in Kabul and Jalalabad. Yesterday he was their sheikh teaching them their learning and today he was their leader on the field of Jihad. Sheikh Khales achieved successes like those achieved by Jalaluddin in Paktia, with the same spirit of enthusiasm and yearning for martyrdom.

In Konar, Maulavi Mohamed Hussein had plunged into the venture of the great trial. In Nuristan the men started under the leadership of unknown Ulema – and it may remain that way forever – and they liberated Nuristan entirely and established Islamic rule there. And this is what happened in Ghazny, Qandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Logar, Maidan and elsewhere. The spirit of Jihad was ignited throughout the country and gradually the power of the army was destroyed. The ruling party lost most of its cadre in furnace of fiery battles or in assassinations that took place on the streets of Kabul and other cities.

When is Russia Coming?

MaulaviJalaluddin was sitting on the mountain top where was located his command center in the village of Sarana. Everything around him was draped in white snow, and the houses were almost invisible within their frozen covers. In this mountain region where the snow reaches the height of a man, most people prefer to migrate to the border region with Pakistan until spring comes. To his right, Jalaluddin cast his glance upon a wooden hut sheltering a Dushka machine gun. Snow had covered it until its interior appeared as a pit covered in white snow. Inside it, the snoring increased from the young Qayyum Khan, wrapped within ragged strips in this stinging icy cold. The presence of Jalaluddin encouraged the youth to sleep easily, relying on his leader to watch the skies and wake him in case of an emergency. Jalaluddin smiled as he looked at the slumbering young man, and the story of the Ahl al-Kahf came to his mind and he murmured the noble Aya: “They were youths who believed in their Lord and We advanced them in guidance”. Then he looked below where lay the houses on the borders of the narrow valley like a great

frozen tomb which had lost all signs of life - except Jalaluddin who was lost in a wave of dark thoughts until he was roused by the sound of crunching ice under the slow, and heavy tread of a panting newcomer.

The newcomer was the officer Golezrak, a former major in the army and a son of the same Zadran tribe to which Haqqani belonged. Haqqani looked at the hard officer with sharp, blue eyes whose breathing was growing choppy and steamy and had carded snow upon his eyelashes and trim mustache.

The two men exchanged a terse greeting betraying the tension and excitement struggling inside both of them incongruous with the icy death surrounding the place. They both sat down next to each other on the stump of an old tree that had long ago collapsed, as if one would find in it no use other than to be a place to sit, recalling the peace and tranquility of eternity.

Golezrak began the talk saying, "Maulavi Sahib, have you sent for me?"

"Yes, Golezrak, perhaps you have heard Radio Kabul this morning?"

"Yes, Maulavi Sahib, the Russian army has come".

"What do you think, major?"

"You know, Maulavi Sahib, what the Russians did to the Muslims in Bokhara and Samarkand."

"And what do you advise, Golezrak?"

"I received my military education at their hands, and I know how they think. They will not begin their real activity in our area before three months with the coming of spring. We need to organize our affairs during this period."

"And how do we organize our affairs?"

"We will not be able to hold out more than three months. Within six months at the most they will have subjugated the entire country."

"Do we withdraw then?"

"This is not exactly what I mean, but we must work to gain time and prolong the period of our resistance to the utmost possible. For perhaps an international solution will appear. Because I don't think the world will be silent about this and maybe China or America will intervene directly in the war. And maybe we will receive much assistance from the Arab states to buy the modern weapons we need."

"I'm asking you what we can do. I'm not concerned about what others do. Those people won't move even if we're slaughtered like sheep. What have they given us during the 18 lean months in which we experienced these things at the hands of Russian experts and their young men. By Allah, you must tell me what must we do?"

“Maulavi Sahib, please do not be angry. We cannot resist for more than three months or about that. I advise that we hide our heavy weapons in the mountain caves and establish a chain of caches to conceal our ammunition. We will distribute the men into small groups to begin guerilla warfare against the Russians. “

“Golezrak, with rifles and small bands we cannot hold all these areas currently in our hands. We cannot even hold the mountain passes we now use. We would close in the faces of our muhajareen in Pakistan the way to return again to their villages. What will happen is that the Russians will control the main roads and mountain passes as well as the cities and villages. And upon them they will pursue us and hunt us one by one as people hunt the wild beasts in the mountains.”

“I think that is a highly logical sequence.”

“Very well. Then we will not surrender our necks to the Russians and we will not let them hunt us like rats. The roads that we need for our movements and for transporting people and muhajareen back and forth will remain open. Our vital areas will remain ours or will kill everyone above them, and the convoys will not safely cross any roads in the province.”

“Maulavi Sahib, this will be a hugely expensive confrontation. The tribal leaders and field commanders must be consulted.”

“It shall be so. I sent one to inform everybody of a meeting tomorrow afternoon for a Shura council of the Mujahedeen and tribes in the province.”

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In the middle of a forest of mulberry and apricot trees dried out from the cold, about 800 persons gathered with all their weapons – young men, mature men, and old men, the blood in whose veins was rekindled by Jihad as they vied with the young men in the front ranks of battle.

All came to hear Jalaluddin, the man with whom they had started Jihad and with whom they plunged into war with all its gravity, blood and martyrs as they participated with him in manufacturing the victory and the glory which had resurrected a bright shining reality.

Jalaluddin stood in front of the assembly representing the Ulema and sheikhs of the tribes, the Mujahedeen and the group leaders. The young scholar stood with his palms placed over the muzzle of his old English rifle, planted on the layer of ice that coated the open space. He remained silent for some time, lost in thought as he scrutinized the faces of those sitting row upon row. Without realizing it, he was searching for the faces of old comrades, most of who had already passed on as martyrs. Of those he found only one – the lean face and sad eyes of the pious Maulavi Ahmad Gul. He was all that remained from the first beginning of the Jihad.

How he longed to see the beloved face of his life-long friend Sheikh Mahmud Lala, that face which radiated peace and tranquility and confidence in victory at even the gravest times of trial and affliction. He twice looked over the faces in the front row, spurred on by the vague hope that he would find him

there, sitting as always with his huge body and his sharp glances like blazing stars shooting from deep eyes combining intelligence and benevolence, shaded by heavy eyebrows like the eaves of a forest concealing endless secrets, and with his old rifle that never left his hands, which possessed the vigor and raw mountainous enormity that enabled him to wring the neck of any earthly beast with ease.

Jalaluddin remained silent, distractedly casting his glance among the rows of men, until he became aware that those gathered before him were waiting upon his decisive word to show them the way through these dark calamities that portended great dangers and made all previous events seem petty by comparison.

He began his speech praising Allah, followed by a brief explanation of all that had happened in Afghanistan since communist coup until the earth-shaking news of the arrival of the Russian army and its occupation of the capital Kabul the previous night, recalling the tragedies which Russia caused for the Muslims in Turkistan (Central Asia) and the slaughters in the great Islamic cities of Bokhara and Samarkand.

He then recited to them Ayas from the Glorious Quran which encourage Jihad and fighting Fi Sabeel Allah and rebuked those who disagreed or were idle in performing this obligation. He spoke to them about the rank of martyrs in Paradise, reminding them of the honors and achievements of their martyred brothers, and how through them Allah protected Islam and the people and by them struck terror in the hearts of infidels thereby gaining great prestige for the Muslim. He then reminded them of the many wonders they had witnessed in hard times and the victory that came down to them from Allah when all believed that defeat and destruction were inescapable. The young scholar did not leave unsaid anything he wanted to say.

Finally, he turned to the tree on his right and rested upon it his old rifle that had been with him since his first departure Fi Sabeel Allah. He then removed the large white turban from his head and began wrapping it around his right armpit and left shoulder and recited these Ayas from the Book of Allah: Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs in return is Paradise: they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Quran: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme. **(Surah al-Tauba Verse 111)**

The men knew well that Ayah and what it meant. The Sheikh had explained it to them repeatedly and the Ulema recited it in the hearing of many. The sheikhs began to cry; they lifted their turbans from their heads and placed them on the ground. They raised their hands towards heaven, saying Amen to the prayer of Jalaluddin who was crying as he beseeched Allah for victory over their enemies and to protect Islam in this country. The young men saw no shame in displaying their emotions and weeping on this occasion, even though it was forbidden for the men of the mountains to show their tears in any other situations.

Jalaluddin stopped talking and the men dried their tears as their turbans lay thrown on the ground. Silence covered the place, a silence that was eloquent in expressing the feelings that no words could describe. There lengthened an absolute silence, unprecedented in similar meetings in the past, as if words and thoughts had been frozen by the piercing winter wind. Above their heads gathered a tension mingled with fighting ardor and uncertainty about what tomorrow would bring in surprises and the pain of the departure of those martyrs coming to join their beloved ones who went in the recent past?

The silence remained heavy until it was broken by a simple bedu who spoke suddenly in a high voice with all the spontaneity of the Bedouin and their instinctive courage. He directed his speech to the young scholar, saying: "Jalaluddin – I heard that the Russians have long rifles with scopes that make far away things appear up close, and that one can kill a man a day's journey away. By Allah, you must tell me when the Russians are coming so I can kill one of them and take his rifle."

Everyone shook with laughter and Jalaluddin's teeth shone with pure laughter. It was as if a mysterious power of energy and joy had penetrated the gloomy atmosphere of the place and entered in a blink of an eye the hearts of those sitting there. They began talking with each other and looking with mirth at the plain bedu.

Jalaluddin calmly gestured to them and announced in a loud voice, "Let all bear witness that the first rifle of this type that we capture as booty will be the share of this man".

The council shook with cries of "Allahu Akbar" and they began to congratulate the man on his new rifle and warmly embracing him laughing with joy and gladness as if the booty was actually in their hands. Jalaluddin was roused to action and embarked with his men in feverish activity racing against time. The coming spring would not see the usual wedding parties. For the snow had begun to melt as if to compete with the men in a grand race to embrace the virgins of paradise.

Tomorrow in spring the streams of Paktia would overflow with water and blood.

PART 2

But Haqqani had another opinion and we will see that he did not wait for the first main battle with the Soviets to unfold on his territory, rather he plunged into a deterrent battle in another area, making the Soviets understand that a battle on the Zadran road would be certain suicide, especially if it occurred at the beginning of the invasion. This might lead to an early frustration of the morale of the Red Army, which was not yet familiar with the territory or the nature of the war occurring upon it. In the framework of their preparations and consultations about the imminent first clash with the Red Army, there was a consensus among the Mujahideen that the Soviets would send large reinforcements to the Gardez, the capital of Paktia, and from there push on to the city of Khost across the Zadran road. And there the big clash would occur.

JalaluddinHaqqani: A Legend of the Afghanistan Jihad, Part II

Demolishing the Myth of the Red Army in Paktia

Penned by: Mustafa Hamed

Preface:

I had the honor of becoming acquainted with a number of the generation of Giants who unleashed the Jihad in its legendary first beginnings in Afghanistan.

Among the names mentioned in the first part was the name of Sheikh Mahmud Lala, may Allah have mercy on him, whom I had met briefly at the Saran Center close to Gardez. I recalled that meeting in my first book, **“15 Rounds Fi Sabeel Allah”**.

In my stories of the events surrounding the launch of the first Jihad, I used many stories, some of which were from MaulaviJalaluddinHaqqani, in addition to many other Mujahideen. I also make special mention of Golzarak, with whom I established a strong relationship in 1983 during the battle of Oruzgan and afterwards. He was a distinguished military personality, as well as being a man of learning, an historian and a poet. He was particularly interested in gathering and recording the events of the Jihad in his Paktia province, and especially the events of the first year, because these events were unusual in both incidents and personalities.

Golzarak had a project to print a book in two parts about the beginnings of the Jihad, and perhaps it could be that he published one part. I do not know what happened to his other historical and literary projects, or to what extent events helped or hindered him in those great ambitions. It is certain, however, that the Americans and their Western (and other) helpers spent huge sums of money in order to gather the documents of that period, written and photographed, and hid them in unknown darkness so that the Muslims would lose their history and their memory, knowing nothing of that history except for that which is stored by the West and its toxic perspectives.

In this installment, I encountered great difficulty in gathering details of the first ambush in the Zurmat valley. This had landed a very sharp blow against the Soviets in Paktia and demolished their terrifying myth in the eyes of the people.

The sources of the accounts I have used are Golzarak and others in the forefront of the Mujahideen in the region. I confess, however, that I did not make a great enough effort to delve into that important historical event. There are a number of excuses for this shortcoming, including my preoccupation with other matters and a lack of time to invest in that labor, in addition to the paucity of resources available to me. I feel sorry for all that, but this poor effort is better than nothing – Mustafa

The Plan for defending Paktia

The Mujahideen and the Soviets both knew that great prize of Paktia was the Khost Plain, on the border of Pakistan, which provides many strategic and political advantages with regards to dealing with Pakistan, whether or not the Soviets decided to launch an attack against it and with regards to controlling the Mujahideen supply routes, most of which ran through Paktia. Khost was one of the most important corridors, and the city of Khost was in the middle of the valley which would have been blockaded from an early period in the outbreak of the Jihad against the Kabul regime, if it had not been for the air bridge which connected it to the capital.

The road between Khost and the provincial capital Gardez was 100 kilometres long. It could be cut by ambushes laid by Jalaluddin, assisted by the tribes of Paktia, especially the Zadran tribe, across whose territory most of the road ran. The government army had sustained huge losses on the road during the time of President al-Tarraqi and later Hafizullah Amin, despite heavy Soviet assistance in experts and advisers. This situation was aided by the mountainous nature of the region, which helped in preparing very dangerous ambushes and led ultimately to the method of supplying Khost by air and bearing the huge financial costs that this entailed.

It was logical that breaking the land siege fixed around Khost would be a top priority of the Soviet army upon its coming to Paktia, meaning the decisive battle would occur on the road crossing the Zadran tribal region.

But Haqqani had another opinion, and we will see that he did not wait for the first main battle with the Soviets to unfold on his territory, rather he plunged into a deterrent battle in another area, making the Soviets understand that a battle on the Zadran road would be certain suicide, especially if it occurred at the beginning of the invasion. This might lead to an early frustration of the morale of the Red Army which was not yet familiar with the territory or the nature of the war occurring upon it. In the framework of their preparations and consultations about the imminent first clash with the Red Army, there was a consensus among the Mujahideen that the Soviets would send large reinforcements to the Gardez, the capital of Paktia, and from there push on to the city of Khost across the Zadran road. And there the big clash would occur.

In his meetings with the field commanders, Haqqani focused on the importance of the first battle and its impact the morale of both the Mujahideen and their foes. He reminded them of the lessons of the first military clashes with the army of the ruling regime, and how, when the Mujahideen seized the first government position, this encouraged the people and they dared to attack the army and destroy their positions and convoys. The awe that people held the army and regime in was brought down, and the hope of the people that they could be overcome rose. And Haqqani said, *“If we are defeated, may Allah not ordain it, then no one will dare to raise a weapon in the face of the Red Army.”*

Then he directed a question to Major Golzarak:

“Tell me, Golzarak, how might the Russians behave in their war with us?”

Golzarak took a military map from his pocket and spread it before Jalaluddin and the other commanders. The men gathered in a circle, reviewing the major's markings upon the lines of his colored map. Their ears and their minds hung upon every word that went round in the council. The major began to explain in his calm tone, and his face acquired its customary sternness in crucial situations like this. His sharp blue eyes flickered back and forth between the map and the faces of Haqqani and the others. He began explaining as if he were reading a prosaic story that he had memorized by heart, and as if he were once again an instructor in the Kabul military academy.

“As we all expect, the Russian will push a huge military force towards Gardez, and then attempt to open the road to Khost. This matter is certain. Another thing is that there will be heavy air cover, which will protect the advancing force, paving the way for it and intervening in any opposition it encounters”.

“Aircraft will heavily bomb our positions between Gardez and the Zurmat plain, to provide security for their coming from Ghozny to Gardez, where they will stay for two or three days, before launching towards Khost. During that time, the aircraft will conduct reconnaissance missions of the area and their forces' lines of advance, striking any suspicious positions. If they discover the headquarters of our leadership, they will bomb it, and perhaps bring in airborne special forces troops. The villages close to their forces line of advance will be bombed, to force the people to flee, and to prevent the Mujahideen from hiding among them”.

“The forces advancing towards Khost will be under the cover of helicopters. These aircraft could disperse mines along the secondary roads that our men might use to hinder our movements and to impact the morale of the people when they are also struck by them. In order to have an even greater impact on our morale, they might to conduct assassinations against our high and mid-level leadership”.

“They might resort to using poison gas against us. We can easily avoid the effects of these gases by following a few guidelines, because of our mountainous regions and because of the impedance of the gas's movement by the wind. But ignorance about this weapon could have a great impact on the morale of our men”.

Golzarak continued with his explanation of the precise details of what he expected to happen, so that unit leaders would not be surprised and confused by any unexpected behavior on the part of the enemy.

He no sooner finished then Jalaluddin asked him another question, saying:

“Tell me, Golzarak, how do the Russians expect us to confront them?”

“The Russians will not expect any great change in the fighting methods of the Mujahideen. True, some heavy weapons from the army have fallen into our hands, but the lack of sufficient ammunition for them limits their effectiveness in a prolonged confrontation. Additionally, the helicopters can pinpoint and destroy the sources of heavy weapon fire. If we use our artillery at 9:00 in the morning, by 10:00 we will have lost it all”.

“They expect us to place small ambushes around Gardez on the road coming from Zurmat and the road going to Khost: small ambushes equipped with anti-tank rocket launchers, mines spread along the road, and light weapons. They know the bravery of the Mujahideen in battle. They also know the limitations of our ammunition and our vulnerability to air attacks”.

Haqqani asked him, *“Very well, Golzarak, is it possible for us to surprise them with something new?”*

The major swiftly answered, *“Of course we can! We could for example organize concentrated night attacks, and we can gather our men from ambushes, and attack the enemy at an isolated point. Their losses would be great, and we are more capable than they at this kind of war.”*

Haqqani responded, *“That is correct, Golzarak. Are the rest of the brothers in agreement with Golzarak’s ideas?”*

They all declared their agreement, other than some marginal comments and questions, and Haqqani continued:

“What I want is for the Russians to continue in their belief that we are on the same, old path. To ensure that, we will during the coming weeks and until the snow begins to melt launch raids on the garrisons of Khost and Gardez. Our ambushes will appear along all the roads that Golzarak mentioned, so that the Russians will think that everything is proceeding according to the model we drew up during these past twenty months”.

Jalaluddin stood up, saying:

“We place our trust in Allah. If Allah aids you, then no one will overcome you. We must begin our work now. Let the commanders of the units head out to their areas to make the necessary arrangements”.

All began to rise and Jalaluddin took the bridle of his mule in his left hand and, with his right hand, started to balance the position of his ancient rifle on his shoulders. Golzarak approached him and whispered in his ear, saying:

“Maulavi Sahib, you did not order an increase in the ambushes on the Khost highway!!”

He answered him tersely:

"We will not increase the ambushes because that is not necessary".

Surprise appeared on the face of the officer, and he continued his questioning in a polite tone:

"I fear that will be necessary to repulse the attack on Khost".

Jalaluddin mounted his mule and looked into the face of the young officer, saying as he urged his mule to into a walk, *"This is not necessary to defend Khost, Golzarak, because we will not let them reach Gardez itself".*

Golzarak's eyes widened in surprise and stood there staring in amazement at Jalal al-Din as he headed out with his mule in the direction of Gardez.

Fighting Helicopters is Forbidden

Khalil, Haqqani's younger brother, pressed his body against the rocks next to his older brother Ibrahim, while helicopter rounds peppered the ground close to his feet, kicking up the dust and scattering the branches of small trees above the heads of the two brothers. No sooner had the helicopter gone a little distance away, than Khalil shook the dust off himself angrily and stood pointing his Russian rifle towards the helicopter, firing a short round as he cursed and screamed:

"A curse upon you, pig!"

Ibrahim dragged his little brother down below the rocks and yelled at him:

"Are you crazy? It will kill you; and your bullets don't affect it".

In even greater agitation, Khalil screamed with the blood rushing to his white face, the dirt clinging to little hairs that grew in patches on his cheeks, and wearing clothing whose original color had all faded:

"Jalaluddin told me that I will place the Dushka (DShK 50 cal anti-aircraft machine gun) on the mountain top and open fire on those dogs. Then why has he forbidden us to fight helicopters? Has Jalaluddin become afraid of the Russians?"

Ibrahim responded to his little brother with a mixture of anger and scorn:

"You have definitely gone mad. Jalaluddin is planning the big battle. What do you know about the art of combat? You are a child. If I had married, I would have produced a child of about your age".

Khalil screamed at the top of his voice, almost masking the sound of the nearby explosions:

"You are also young! How old are you? 20? 21? Jalaluddin is 15 years older than you are, as for Ismail he is more than..."

The shouting of the brothers was interrupted by the calm, recognizable voice of the Mujahid Abdul Bari, who had previously been a corporal in the army. He was drawn towards them by the loud shouting between them and he asked in his distinctive voice:

“What is with you two? Has one of you been hit?”

Ibrahim laughed, pointing to his younger brother:

“Nothing, other than the fact that this lad has lost his mind and wants to disobey the orders of Jalaluddin and place the Dushka on the top of the mountain and hit the helicopters”.

Abdul Bari smiled and the features of his strong, kind face transformed:

“Don’t worry, Khalil. Jalaluddin will soon issue orders for that. I have never seen anything before like that heavy aerial bombardment. They began at 7 in the morning, and ended at 5 in the evening. They’re bombing the whole area from Khost to Zurmat. O Allah, Moscow has sent all of its aircraft to us here in Paktia.”

Abdul Bari stroked his long black beard and began to watch the helicopters bomb a nearby position. He muttered, *“Idiots, there is no one there. Do you wish to tear out the mountains?”*

He then continued, as if he was talking to himself, *“Did you know? They threw cluster bombs on the mountain west of Khost. They looked like green locusts. One of the shepherds and his flock found themselves in the middle of the mines. Twenty sheep were killed and the shepherd’s son lost his leg. Poor thing... poor child!”*

Abdul Bari stood distractedly with his far-away gaze, absently repeating the same sentence: *“Poor thing... poor child”*.

Traced in his imagination was a picture of the family he had left behind in Mazar-i-Sharif: his old mother, his wife and his small son, Naseem. What had happened to them now? A year and a half had passed since he deserted the army while serving in Khost and joined the Mujahideen, becoming one of the most Mujahideen of Paktia.

He thought that his family had perhaps lost hope in his return. He knew nothing about them, and they didn’t know whether he was dead or alive. How he missed his child Naseem, and how he longed to hug him to his chest and kiss him. The poor thing... the poor child. Abdul Bari unconsciously repeated this, completely unaware of those around him.

He was awoken from his dreams by the voice of Khalil:

“Hey, Abdul Bari. Where are you?”

He responded, not completely returned to the world around him:

“Tomorrow I will be in ShahiKut with 50 men”.

Ibrahim was stunned, and he cried out in shock and amazement:

“ShahiKut?? In Zumat?? Why??”

“I don’t know. These are the orders of Maulavi Sahib. We will not go down to the ruined village but stay in the mountains behind it until Jalaluddin’s orders reach us”.

Ibrahim struck his hand on his forehead and, still confused and not understanding what he was saying, exclaimed:

“ShahiKut! This is not rational: you are our best marksman for anti-tank rockets. What will you do there?? And how can you go with your entire group? The Zurmat Plain stretches as far as the eye can see! You would have to walk for hours before a tank would be in range of your weapon. This is madness... we do not need...”

Abdul Bari shrugged his shoulders, paying no heed to the words of Ibrahim, and said indifferently:

“I don’t know, this is what Maulavi Sahib Jalaluddin wants. He must be planning something”.

Abdul Bari was right. Because there **was** something that Jalaluddin was planning.

Four long days passed and the modern Russian M24 helicopters almost did not stop. They bombed everything and every place where a person could possibly hide. Most of the villages, even in the depths of the mountains, fell under the bombardment and destruction. Indeed the violent aerial assault paving the way for the attacking Russian forces was proceeding exactly as Golzarak expected.

Jalaluddin issued orders to hide the heavy weapons in places he himself had determined. Golzarak alone knew that this was tied to a plan he was preparing in absolute secrecy.

The First Battle with the Russians

News arrived that the Russian forces had reached Ghozny and were preparing to move towards Gardez.

Jalaluddin met with the unit leaders and gave them orders about what they must do throughout the day, until the time came for the battle.

The Mujahideen had to spread out from one end of the Zurdat Valley near Gardez to the other part of the valley opposite ShahiKut.

In the morning it was expected that aircraft would bomb the sides of the road along which the Russians would advance. The Mujahideen had to stay away from that area until the bombardment was over, and

then occupy their positions when the Gardez forces advanced, moving towards the Zurmat Plain, until they reached the enemy forces from Ghozny actually approaching Gardez.

Here the unit leaders asked in astonishment:

“We expect the Russian forces to come to Gardez, not that a force from Gardez will move out to the Zurmat Plain. In a position like this we can fight, but not attack on exposed ground like this!”

Jalaluddin answered them:

“This is what the Russians also expect. For that reason, we will attack them in a place where they do not expect it, and that is the Zurmat Plain, at a time when they will never expect to see us there... in the morning!”

Confrontation in the Wide Valley

In the middle of the night, the Mujahideen slipped away in small parties from ShahiKut, heading for the broad Zurmat Plain. Along the sides of the road which crossed the valley, the Mujahideen chose their positions with the utmost care. They spread out in small groups over a distance of five kilometers. They numbered 200 Mujahideen. The road was in the sights of their rifles, and they did not plant mines on the road. All that was required was to camouflage the concealed men, so their brothers covered them with tree branches and grass, even dirt and thorns, so that the enemy would not discover their position, and expose them all to annihilation, and cause the entire plan to fail. Thus those men spent the night until the morning.

The helicopters began their work early in the morning, reconnoitering the valley and bombing the corridor leading to Gardez. This activity continued until 10 in the morning, until the Russian forces appeared in the distance. Three light armored vehicles arrived, moving rapidly and disregarding the men's ambushes until they reached the end of the road from Gardez. They began firing on the rocks and proceeded for a while towards the city. They then turned around and returned to where they had come from. The force continued along the road towards the city, and the helicopters continued to hover overhead. They would move ahead of it to the corridor and fire long showers of gunfire, then turn around and go back.

The convoy halted briefly until the helicopters had finished their reconnaissance and strafing. They then resumed their march after being reassured that the road was safe.

The first tank arrived in front of the position of Abdul Bari, and it was he who was tasked with determining the start of the battle.

Abdul Bari fidgeted underneath the heaps of earth and thorns which was covering him, murmuring in a low voice the prayer which Jalaluddin had taught him: *In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah, and when ye throw, it is not ye who throws but it is Allah who throws.*”

Then he cried in his booming voice announcing the start of the battle: “*Allahu Akbar!*”

He then launched the first round on the tank facing him. Its turret was blown into the air, and it exploded. For five kilometers, all along the length of the ambush, there were successive explosions of tanks and ammunition trucks. Chaos spread in the ranks of the Russian force, and it turned tail, and sought refuge in flight: back to Ghazni from where it had come. The vehicles in the front tried to get past the wrecks, and flee to Gardez. But mines had been planted and the Mujahideen had hastily laid ambushes in order to cut off communications between the city and the force under attack. Those vehicles fell into the trap and only a few escaped. Even the reinforcements that tried to move from Gardez fell into the ambushes and the mines. They were thrown into confusion and overcome by hesitation. They then retreated until the situation became clearer. The enemy soldiers and many of its vehicles were scattered in disorder in many directions. The helicopters tried to help them, but in the atmosphere of violent chaos, their efforts were mostly futile. One of the aircraft was struck and crashed in the valley. Some went to Gardez, while a number of others turned back in the direction of the capital Ghazni. When dusk fell, the battle was approaching its end. The convoy had been destroyed and the counterattack launched in attempt to save it had been defeated. The Mujahideen began to evacuate the Martyrs and the wounded from the field of battle. As for the booty, it was very great, and had to be swiftly collected before the aircraft came to destroy it in the morning, or a new force came from Gardez or Ghazni to withdraw their losses and pursue the Mujahideen exhausted by yesterday's battle

There were forty Martyrs from the battle and about 90 wounded.

Jalaluddin smiled when they brought him among the booty a number of modern weapons, including sniper rifles with scopes, and submachine guns only carried by Russian officers. Jalaluddin began to inspect the rifles, and take them in his hands in amazement.

Then he remembered the man who had asked him when the Russians would come, so that he could take as booty from them such a rifle as this. So he said to those around him:

“The sniper rifle is his portion in front of Allah, for it has been promised to him. As for this modern machine gun, this is for Abdul Bari, who fired the first shot in this great victory.”

Standing next to him was Maulavi Abdul Rahman. Bowing his head, he said in a voice that struggled with tears:

“May Allah have mercy on them. Both of those men were martyred”.

The Gift

Jalaluddin stood under a large tree on top of the mountain overlooking ShahiKut. He was preparing to move out towards the city of Oruzgan. Standing at his side were Golzarak and Maulavi Abdul Rahman. He began to straighten his garb and balance his ammunition belt and his ancient rifle on his shoulders. He addressed the two men:

"I am leaving Paktia now, and I am certain that none of the people fear the Russian army. Its reputation has been destroyed and after that it will never defeat us, Allah permitting. No matter what force they gather against us, no one will retreat before it".

"I am heading for Oruzgan today, for the fighting has been heavy there for several days, and I have heard that Maulavi Arslan is ill". The two men said goodbye to him and withdrew. Then his brothers Ibrahim and Khalil came up to him. He scrutinized the face of his younger brother and spoke to him in concern:

"What is with you Khalil? Are you sick? Your eyes are red and swollen."

The young man answered him in a weak, exhausted voice:

"Never, Maulavi Sahib. But I did not sleep well last night."

But Ibrahim explained the matter to his older brother, saying:

"Khalil cried a lot last night. He lost many friends in the battle yesterday. They were among the martyrs. And he has been greatly affected by the loss of Abdul Bari."

Jalaluddin responded with sympathy:

"Those Martyrs are happy. They are now in the Garden of Eternity, alive with their Lord and sustained. We are pained by their loss, but we should not be sorrowful for them. We should be happy and rejoice for them and we wish to join to them."

Khalil responded with emotion:

"Abdul Bari dreamed about his son so much and wanted to see him. Now, he is about to be buried in a strange land away from his home and his family."

Jalaluddin responded kindly, *"We beseech Allah to grant patience to his family and compensate them with goodness in his stead. As for you, look out for yourself and your health. Don't abandon yourself to sorrow. For the war has not ended yet and the path of Jihad is long"*.

Jalaluddin bid farewell to his brothers, and began to quietly descend the mountain. He had not gone very far when Khalil yelled:

"Sahib, are we allowed to use the Dushka against the aircraft?"

Jalaluddin turned smiling and said in a loud voice:

"Of course you can do that. That's the reason we put you on the mountain."

Khalil could almost fly with happiness. He shouted giddily:

“And if I shoot down an airplane, will you grant me a new rifle?”

Jalaluddin responded, and the smile had not left his lips:

“Rather I will find you a pretty girl to marry.”

The young man’s face reddened with embarrassment, and he was silent as he hid from the glances of his brother Ibrahim, who laughed noisily until he was sitting on the ground holding his stomach.

PART 3

The events of the past two installments on Maulavi Jalaluddin Haqqani, one of the legendary figures of the Jihad in Afghanistan, were taken from a book, entitled “Highlights from the First Year”, which I had composed in 1983 but never published until now.

In this third installment, I had intended to move to another stage in the story of that huge leader whose journey I had accompanied from 1979 until the fall of the Communist regime in Kabul in 1992 - had it not been for al-Somood Magazine which in its last edition recounted the story of the martyrs of the current battles against the American-European armies of occupation in that country. They referred to the story of the martyrdom of one young hero, Mullah Muhammad Amin (‘Ateesh) who was martyred during an American campaign supported by its allied forces against the detainees in the Pol-e Charkhi prison on the outskirts of Kabul.

Rockets, tanks and heavy and light weapons were used in the battle which resulted in the death of 85 people whom the attacking forces led away, shackled in chains and executed in front of the Mullah. That incident confirmed that the Americans were applying – almost literally – the Communist and Soviet experience in Afghanistan, and that the “democracy” ruling now in Kabul under the protection of the American army is literally applying the methods of Marxism which ruled Kabul under the protection of the Soviet army.

In view of its terrible role in the political history of Afghanistan in the modern era, the Pol-e Charkhi prison deserves to be singled out for its own book. Perhaps a Muslim researcher will be able to produce such a book in the future.

We return to the events that were depicted in the beginning of the book “Highlights of the First Year”. I had not intended to deal with them here, because I thought that they were unconnected to what is occurring today. But the incident of the martyrdom of Mullah Muhammad Amin has confirmed that the Soviet experience in Afghanistan has not yet ended. Rather it is continuing, but at the hands of the Americans and under a new name: “democracy”.

- Mustafa

The Communists Rule Kabul

[The sources for this part are the Afghan Mujahideen and a story by the Kabul correspondent for the German Stern magazine]

27 April 1978

At seven in the evening, the military forces attacked the Dahamzank prison in the middle of the city, precisely near Kabul University. The barrels of the tanks were aimed at the walls of the prison and the main gates. After a short battle, the attackers were able to enter the prison and liberate the leader of the

Communist movement in Afghanistan, Nur Muhammad Taraki, who had been incarcerated with a group of his comrades, including Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal. In their overflowing joy, the leader of the Communist Party suggested that they all head to the radio station where the Revolutionary Command Council would all meet in order to take part in the military operation.

One of the armored vehicles carrying the Marxist leaders moved to the radio station, but the situation remained obscure until the middle of the night. Doubts assailed the leader of the organization as he heard news of the violent resistance put up by officers loyal to the president of the Republic, Muhammad Daoud. Reports of acts of violence in other districts followed successively, and this was sufficient cause for the Revolutionary Command Council to refrain from officially announcing the name of the new President.

When General Abdul Qader, one of the prominent military men who executed the coup, spoke on the radio at 11:00 PM, he mentioned nothing about the country's future leader or about the other leaders of the coup. And so the party leaders spent their night in Kabul directing the coup and monitoring events. As for the Soviets, they maintained their connection with the coup leaders through the Soviet embassy. The leaders of the coup movement indeed spent the night on board an Antonov aircraft at the Khwaja Rawash airport in Kabul, ready to leave the country if necessary.

The coup plotters were able to finish off the resistance put up by supporters of President Muhammad Daoud. When the Communist leader Taraki assumed control of affairs and began to direct the activities of the government, his first and most important goal was to destroy "religious backwardness in Afghanistan".

("Tara Ki", or as made famous by Arab writers as "Taraki", originally Tara Ki which is the name of one of the famous Pashtun tribes to which Nur Muhammad Tara Ki belonged).

The movement leaders immediately and completely began to work together to guarantee the destruction of the traditional Islamic forces, and especially the *ulema*, who in turn immediately launched a ruthless campaign against the new regime. The new regime in its response did not spend a single minute of its time in futile efforts. The new president Taraki and his war staff (Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal) killed the former president Muhammad Daoud, his brother Muhammad Naim and all members of their family. The sun did not rise on the 30th of April until the entire family of Muhammad Daoud had been physically wiped out.

During the first week after the coup, all the supporters of the previous president in the army, police and civil administration were executed by firing squad without even a show trial. In the same fashion, the greater portion of high ranking officers in the police, who had received their training in Federal Germany, were also executed in the first days after the coup.

But the greatest afflictions of all fell on the assembly of the Muslims *ulema*. The members of the ruling Communist Khalq – or People's Party – would begin to beat up a scholar and all his students and those close to him, and they would see his patience and endurance. Then they would turn to methods of spiritual torture, which are harsher upon the spirit of the Muslim than physical torture, heaping abuse on Allah, the Messenger and the Quran. This would enrage the victim and subsequently the methods for physical torture would proceed and this would be the end of the matter.

Some of the *ulema* were flayed alive in front of their families, brothers and followers. Then the same procedure would be conducted in turn on the remaining individuals one by one. If a breath of life remained in any of them, they would subsequently drag them into the square and the soldiers would fire upon the corpses, shooting away most of their limbs.

Friday, 14 September 1979

Before lunch, the new president Nur Muhammad Taraki was sitting in the Republican Palace, in the company of the Soviet Ambassador, (Alexander) Puzanov. The ambassador was frowning and the conversation was sharp. The reason for this was that the Prime Minister, Hafizullah Amin had expelled from the government two ministers who were among the strongest supporters of Moscow. The first of these was Aslam Watanjar, the Minister of Defense, who had received his military training and education in Moscow. The second was Shah Jan Mazdarjan, the Minister of Border Affairs.

The Soviet Ambassador suggested that Taraki order the dismissal of Amin and strip him of all his powers. Taraki stated to the Ambassador that it was impossible to do this, because Amin's supporters had penetrated all sensitive centers of power, where he had placed his devoted men. He had also formed a special military force equipped with the most modern weapons including tanks and armored vehicles. Additionally, the forces guarding the Ministry of Defense and the broadcast station were all loyal to Amin.

In reality, since the appointment of Amin as Prime Minister on the 28th of March, 1979, he immediately began to strengthen his power and he had truly become the ruler of the country, relegating Taraki to no more than a figurehead.

The Soviet Ambassador repeated his instructions to Taraki to order his followers to arrest Amin. Under insistent pressure, Taraki agreed and began to execute the plan. He issued a summons for the Prime Minister to be present at the Republican Palace, to convene an emergency session of the Revolutionary Command Council. Amin's spies inside the Republican Palace, however informed him of what had transpired between Taraki and Ambassador Puzanov and he deduced that the summon to the Republican Palace was the beginning of a plot against him.

Before Amin made his way to the palace, he took precautions and issued orders to his military units to prepare, and contacted his military factional partisans to confront a possible plot from hostile parties. Amin headed to the Republican Palace where president Taraki was awaiting him in the company of the dismissed Minister of Defense, Aslam Watanjar and his armed supporters.

Amin arrived at the palace accompanied by his bodyguard. As soon as he opened the door in front of him to meet with the president, he was greeted by a hail of bullets from the followers of Aslam Watanjar. Amin amazingly escaped the bullets, but his comrade was killed. Amin fled the conference chamber and his men began to exchange fire with the attackers. President Taraki, however, was struck by a number of rounds and taken to hospital for treatment. What occurred remained a secret for more than three weeks until Radio Kabul announced the death of Taraki.

During the above mentioned clash, the scheming General Watanjar was able to flee the Republican Palace accompanied by Soviet Ambassador Puzanov, using a secret path to arrive at the Soviet embassy complex in Kabul, where the plotting General requested political asylum.

(However, some Afghan sources report that after Nur Taraki had differences with his trusted pupil Hafizullah Amin – famously known by this name – was invited by Amin to the Republican Palace at night and he had no bodyguard with him. Taraki enjoyed shurba, which is a local Afghan food. In one of the ground-floor rooms of the palace, Amin prepared for him shurba, with a lot of meat in it. After he ate the food, one of Amin's guards placed a pillow over Taraki's mouth and sat on top of him until he died.)

The triumphant Amin returned after a short time with a force of his private guard, armed with tanks and heavy weapons. They surrounded the Republican Palace and exchanged fire with the Republican Guard. Similar clashes occurred at the broadcast station and the Ministry of Defense. Amin did not let the opportunity slip from his hands. He issued orders to besiege Kabul and close its access points. When night had just fallen, the shooting stopped and he had taken control of the capital. Taraki's supporters were not able to recover power. They tried to organize a military insurrection, but Amin's supporters swiftly put an end to them.

After the success of the coup and the stabilization of Amin's situation, the Soviet Ambassador conducted talks with him. The Ambassador understood that it was unavoidable for his country to deal with Amin. Nonetheless the Ambassador did not miss the opportunity to explain to Amin that he would not be able to hang onto his power without seeking the aid of Soviet might. Amin immediately agreed to a deal. The Soviets extended their support to Amin, who bestowed upon himself a number of titles: President of the Republic, President of the Revolutionary Council, President of the Afghan Democratic People's Party (Khalq), and Chief of the Council of Ministers.

In a press conference, Amin announced in the presence of foreign journalists that the previous president Taraki had been removed for "health reasons". The Kabul government imposed a complete shroud on news of Taraki and his whereabouts and severely curtailed the movement of foreign diplomats and journalists.

However, news leaked from the Kabul Military Hospital that Taraki had been hit by gunfire while he was in his office on 14 September. The government immediately declared the news to be a lie and attributed it to rumor-mongers. Amin said that the president was very sick and that his health condition did not permit him to exercise his duties. At last on 9 October, the government in Kabul announced the death of Taraki following what it described as a "chronic disease".

Afterwards, one of the government employees declared that Amin had tried to get Taraki's to sign papers condemning him for "betraying the revolution and the people", but that he had refused. He conducted the same method against other politicians that were dismissed from power, so as to pave the way for their execution.

Not two days had passed before Amin's supporters began to remove the huge pictures and posters of former president Taraki, that were filling the capital, who had until recently been receiving accolades and

adulatory slogans from Radio Kabul such as “The Great Beloved Leader” and “The Heroic Son of Afghanistan”.

Before the masses discovered what had happened to Taraki, Amin was standing before an Afghan labor delegation repeating his slogan, “I and Taraki are like the fingernail and flesh – you cannot separate us”.

On the Monday following his seizure of power, Amin received a message from the Soviet leadership congratulating him on his new position. It was signed by the Soviet Premier (Leonid) Brezhnev and his Prime Minister (Aleksey) Kosygin. Moscow quickly declared its support for the new coup, when only four days before Brezhnev had at the Moscow airport greeted Taraki on his way back from Cuba, where he had been attending a conference of non-aligned nations!!!! The reception was lavish and even Soviet news agency TASS had described what occurred as “Talks governed by heart-felt love between the comrades”.

From the success of the coup until the assassination of the “leader”, the regime had through murder and assassination removed 25,000 Muslim religious scholars and educators. Mujahideen sources estimated the number of victims of the new regime from among the Muslim scholars and religious figures at approximately half a million, in addition to another 80,000 Muslims from all other walks of life, including doctors, teachers, merchants, tribal chiefs and farmers. The massacres were conducted by Communist members of Khalq and Parcham parties. The terror reached the point where it became a customary event in the capital and other districts for any critic of the regime or its “progressive” (!!) laws to be summarily shot.

At the end of 1979 the activities of the ruling Khalq party shifted to the countryside after they had “cleansed” the cities of oppositionists and “reactionaries”. A ruthless campaign began against farmers and land owners who opposed farm ownership laws and agricultural reform.

At this point armed resistance to the regime expanded greatly. Mujahideen organizations spread and achieved tangible successes, expelling government representatives from their areas. The regime tried to cling to the land in its hands, and greatly widened the killing and use of the army in those districts. The pools of blood did not stop even after the transfer of power to Hafizullah Amin.

Meanwhile, the power and the victories of the Mujahideen grew greatly and unexpectedly, causing a political and military blow to the ruling Revolutionary Council in Kabul as well as the Kremlin. The enormous losses in lives and equipment they suffered made the soldiers and officers shrink from confronting the Mujahideen. To rescue the regime, Moscow decided to use its air force over the broadest possible area. It launched unparalleled and barbaric attacks on Mujahideen regions and rural villages. Thousands of civilians were slain and dozens of villages and large swaths of agricultural lands were incinerated along with their crops.

To counter this aggression, a number of popular armed insurrections were launched, one of which was able to seize control of the city of Herat in March of 1979. Another uprising occurred in the city of Jalalabad in April of the same year, costing thousands of civilian lives to stamp out the insurrectionists. Soviet bomber aircraft deployed from their bases to strike Herat with severe force.

The government lost confidence in the communist officers who had been exhausted by the war and whose

ranks had been torn apart. These ranks were also shredded by the internecine campaigns of elimination in the internal struggles between the different Communist fractions.

Many of the officers in the army who were not party members were inclined to help the Mujahideen. Some units joined them along with all of their weapons. Some officers were content with merely leaking information to the Mujahideen.

In September of that same year, the Soviets understood the gravity of the situation as the political and military collapse of the (Kabul) regime became obvious to them. The Mujahideen controlled almost the entire area in the countryside and the mountains and were satisfied with besieging the large cities and skirmishing with their military garrisons. At the same time they were pushing towards the capital with a large force and concentrating in the surrounding mountains, preparatory to storming it. Having no faith in the ruling regime there, the Soviets then decided to take over the job, and enter inside Afghanistan themselves. And President Amin had to leave office.

Preparations began in Moscow to burn Amin politically. The Soviet TASS news agency carried a report from Kabul that former President Taraki had been strangled on 8 October 1979, after being arrested on the orders of Hafizullah Amin. The agency published the names of three soldiers who claimed that they had participated in the act: Officer Muhammad Iqbal, Corporal Abdul Wadud and Private Rawais. The agency did not reveal the source or how it obtained the news. But after the death of President Amin, many of his “crimes and terrorist practices against the people” became known although these were things that he would not have been able to accomplish without Soviet help.

After a while, Amin grasped that the Soviets would get rid of him so he began a desperate race against time, just as President Daoud had done previously. Amin felt as if he were suspended in the air after the party lost most of its cadre in the mutual exterminations and in the battles with the Mujahideen. Amin drafted a quick plan to counter Soviet intentions. For he knew through practice how they thought and how they disposed of their men who were burned after they burned their countries. The plan was centered on courting the growing Islamic power, reaching a truce with them and convincing them to march under his banner. With them he would frighten the Soviets and warn them against touching him.

The plan began with changing the state’s media program and ceasing the campaign against Islam and describing it as a “reactionary force”. He began to refer to Islam as the “official religion of the state” and radio programs started with *Bismallah*. Recitations of the Quran found their way to the listeners of Radio Kabul, after having been previously banned. Amin did not stop at that, but began a dialogue with the *ulemain* the mosques about the situation in the country and how to escape from the current predicament.

The Kremlin leadership was not sympathetic to this or happy about it. On 27 September, President Amin received the first serious warning from the Kremlin, cautioning him against this program (to avoid bloodshed!!!) and promised personal support to him and guaranteeing the lives of his family – his wife and four daughters and the lives of all his relatives.

Amin understood from these guarantees and assurances, in Soviet usage, were nothing but a prelude to strike and dispose of him. He also knew that they were preparing Babrak Karmal to take power. Babrak was at the time located in one of the Soviet Republics near the Afghan borders in the company of

Aslam Watanjar, the previous Minister of Defense, whom Amin expelled and he had tried to assassinate Amin in collaboration with Taraki in the original conspiracy that ended by bringing Amin to power rather than killing him.

At 3:30 in the afternoon, a large group of Soviet technicians headed out to make repairs on the central telephone exchange located in the Republican Palace. As a result of these “repairs” all telephones connected to the Republican Palace were rendered inoperable. No one paid any attention to this occurring, because this was the completion of repair work that had begun months before and had already been scheduled to be finished that day.

The same night, the Soviet Embassy in Kabul threw a grand cocktail party in honor of the “Great Leader Of Afghanistan”. Most of the leadership of the army and air force were invited to attend. One of the military men that attended described what happened:

“Bottles of vodka were distributed around the tables in a conspicuous manner. The Russians were plying us with wine in strange fashion. It became clear to us afterward they had intended the wine to play with our heads to allow them to carry out their fiendish plan. The food and hors-oeuvres were very delicious and the vodka was even more marvelous. But after I departed the place and returned home I fell unconscious. When memory of this party returned to me, I realized that the Russians had taken the food away quickly and replaced it with appetizers and vodka, and thereby all the officers became paralyzed with inebriation.”

That same night, Hafizullah Amin was sitting in his office pondering the unknown future, when he was surprised by a Soviet officer who burst into his office and handed him a communiqué issued by the Kremlin ordering him to hand over all his powers to the Soviets. The Soviet officer informed him that he had orders to move him and his entire family from Kabul within half an hour, adding that armored vehicles were already surrounding the Republican Palace.

The officer withdrew and Amin quickly thought of how he could make use of the half hour respite granted to him. He tried to contact his men in the army to make them understand the situation, but the phone lines were cut. The Soviet experts had not yet finished the “repair” work which they had begun in the morning.

Then Amin issued orders to the guard to open fire on the Soviet force which was surrounding the place, which numbered 1,200 Soviet soldiers equipped with armored vehicles.

Violent gunfire broke out between the two sides and some of the armored vehicles were set alight. But the attackers overcame the guard, and according to the orders they had received, they arrested the President alive and led him to the Soviet Embassy building, taking with them three sacks filled with important documents from the Republican Palace. In the Soviet Embassy, intelligence officers interrogated Amin for four continuous hours before executing him by firing squad at four in the morning.

(This was the story written by the German correspondent in Kabul, but the confirmed Afghan story is: After the Russian had poisoned his food, Amin went to his home in the Tajbeg Palace overlooking the small hills in south Kabul, near the famous Darul Aman Palace. The Soviet soldiers who arrived on the

day that Hafizullah Amin's food was poisoned stormed the palace using machine guns. They knew the room on the second story of the palace was where Amin was living. They attacked him while he was lying on his bed, killing him there and wounding some members of his family. After they were sure they had killed him, they stopped the attack and took his family members – his wife, four daughters and his son Abdul Rahman, 12 people in all – to the Pol-e Charkhi prison.)

On the same night there was a huge air bridge carrying Soviet forces numbering 80,000 with all their equipment. The Soviets began a swift and decisive operation to seize control of the Afghan capital. A number of Afghan units attempted to resist, but they were put down without mercy. All who tried to resist or protest were shot, no matter what their position in the party or the army was.

Two important people paved the way for the Soviet invasion and the swift and easy subjugation of the Afghan army: General Watanjar, who had remained hidden in the Soviet Embassy since the 14th of September, and General Abdul Qader, whom Amin had arrested a short time before his death on charges of high treason.

Generals Watanjar and Abdul Qader were able to take control of the Ministry of Defense and Presidential Palace. The Soviet Embassy ended the party it had thrown for the top Afghan officers, who left the embassy building intoxicated. Before they arrived home, they heard machine gun fire reverberating around the capital. With difficulty they grasped what was afoot. Some of them tried to head to their units, but to no avail.

A high-ranking officer who later served in the ranks of the Mujahideen said that on the night of the Soviet invasion, the airport officer was surprised by Soviet military aircraft landing on the runway without prior permission. Feelings of confusion prevailed when everybody discovered that no one there knew about these airplanes or who had given them permission to land. So they started to contact the high command, and those commands tried to contact the President of the Republic, to inquire if he had authorized them to receive the Soviet aircraft. Because communications with the Republican Palace had been cut off, those officers' efforts became fruitless.

The Soviet soldiers landed with armored vehicles from inside huge Antonov aircraft. They swiftly seized control of the airport installations and marched towards the capital.

As for President Amin, the Mujahideen knew that his private doctor was a Soviet agent and he had persistently slipped poison to him during treatment. On the night of the invasion, Amin was robbed of his will and incapable of making any decisions. Enthusiastic statements were launched from Radio Kabul announcing the fall of the Amin's rule and the appointment of a new President of the Republic, Babrak Karmal. It also announced the release of members of the Communist Parcham Party whom Amin had arrested. General Abdul Qader was also released. Then the voice of the new President Babrak Karmal rang out forcibly announcing: *"The fascist regime of Hafizullah Amin has been swept away"*.

Those declarations were nothing, but tapes recorded previously in Tashkent, where Karmal had been lurking, waiting for the Soviets to summon him to ascend to the Kabul throne. One night, under the cover of darkness, a Soviet Antonov aircraft transported him from Tashkent to Kabul to become the third Communist President in the history of Afghanistan.

The speed and force of the strike deprived the residents of Kabul not only of the ability to react, but to even imagine what was taking place. The residents of the rest of the country were baffled or drunk with shock from what they were witnessing. All were struck by the paralysis and impotence. No one wanted to believe what he was seeing and hearing.

Harbingers of Jihad

With the arrival of Taraki to the seat of government as the first Communist President in the history of Afghanistan and the success of the Communist regime in controlling the country with prompt speed, the *ulema* launched a violent campaign of criticism against the former ruling regime of President Daoud, the in-law and cousin of King Zahir Shah. They accused the two of opening the door wide for the infiltration of communist ideas among the youth, an increase of Soviet influence in the country and an expansion in sending military academy cadets and officers to receive their education in Moscow, where they were indoctrinated with Communist principles. The Daoud era was the one in which Communist organizations began to be established and to infiltrate the security apparatus and civil administration.

However, after Daoud sensed the imminent danger his communist friends posed to himself and that Soviet pressure on him was increasing, he moved to arrest prominent Communist leaders in an attempted race against time. But the opportunity slipped from between his hands. The Communists were able to beat him and aim their blow against him and strip the country from his grasp and in doing so drowned Afghanistan in a dark sea of blood.

The Muslim *ulema* had passed through difficult times during the reign of King Zahir Shah and the subsequent rule of his cousin, President of the Republic Daoud. During their two reigns, successive governments strived to stifle action by the *ulema*. One means of doing this was appointing some of them to government posts and prominent social situations. For the most part, however, these labors went the way of the winds and yielded no results.

This is regarded as an extension of those efforts that go back to old times, beginning with King Amanullah in 1929, when the king tried to overturn the notions of the Afghan people about Islam and replace these with Western ideas until he was answered with a popular revolution led by the Muslim *ulema* which resulted in him losing his throne.

First day of the coup

Nur Muhammad Taraki had barely returned to the seat of government in the People's Palace when Marxist Parties began executing a well-studied and masterful plan to physically eliminate their political competitors. In less serious cases, they threw them into awful prisons, none other than the Pol-e Charkhi prison where no one knew anything about them.

The Communist coup, which occurred on the evening of 27 April, began at dawn on 27 April in order to execute its previously prepared program to eliminate the Islamists. Communist cells throughout the

country had beforehand compiled detailed lists with the names of persons who had to be killed “to guarantee the safety of the revolution”.

The lists contained the names and addresses of tens of thousands of men, *ulema*, and students of religious *madrasas* in addition to university and college students and even tribal leaders. The lists did not exclude one person who had any connection or suspected links to Islamist activity. In a series of raids, thousands of men and youths were led away, to no one knows where.

Thousands were executed immediately. For those found in the outskirts of the cities or in the countryside, they were ordered to lie flat on the ground where they were mowed down with fire from heavy machine guns mounted on armored vehicles and tanks, which would run over them at the end of the massacre to make sure that the mission was fully accomplished and none of those upon whom suspicion fell remained alive.

The Second Day of the Coup

Hundreds of homes were burned in the villages and the mountains and the families of those wanted men who had been able to escape were arrested and detained as hostages until the fugitives gave themselves up. Mosques large and small were attacked. Any attempt at protest, or even holding up a sign expressing dissatisfaction, was debated with the muzzle of a rifle. In short, the theory of “revolutionary violence” was applied with exemplariness worthy to be taught in the highest Marxist institutes.

Throughout their long history, the Afghan people had never seen anything at all like this huge “accomplishment” by any government. So cruel and violent was this blow that they were frozen and struck by what resembled complete paralysis. Even the tough mountain men – who traditionally keep weapons and rifles to defend themselves – were afflicted by this paralysis. For the first time, tanks and armored vehicles were trampling their villages and high speed jet fighters were circling near the roofs of their homes, shaking the spirit and killing any idea of disobedience. For the first time the central government was able to humble the mountain tribes and burn their homes; to arrest their leaders and their *ulema*, to throw them in prison or to execute them in full view of all.

A few inside the country however were able to recover swiftly from the fright of that first blow of blood and terror. On the third day, the first act of resistance to the new regime began, as an example and a traditional pattern to be followed in many parts of the country even if the details differed. The following incident occurred:

The First Rebellion in Zadran

The Place: A mountain region in Paktia province where the Zadran tribe dwells.

The Event: The arrival of a notification from the government to one family requiring their presence at the police center to receive the corpse of one of their sons, killed hours after his arrest.

The corpse was handed over to them and the officer gave the family instructions that the body was to be buried quickly with no ceremony, no reading of the Quran, or any other religious or traditional ceremony for the burial of the dead. To guarantee his orders were followed, the officer sent a squad of his men to guard the funeral party until the body was buried. A son of the village, Major Muhammad Akbar, was hiding outside the village near his clan. He was well known in the army for his integrity and his hostility to the Communists. At night Akbar made an agreement with the village scholar Maulavi Aziz Khan that after the burial he would stand up and preach to the people, making clear to them the *shari'ah* requirement to fight this infidel regime which was controlling the country. He also told a number of the young men of the village of the plan.

On the morning of the next day, the quick, sad and silent funeral procession moved out with their guard of security men armed with automatic weapons. Quietly the martyr was buried. The village cleric Maulavi Aziz Khan stood and gave a speech, starting with *Alhamdulillah* and beseeching mercy for the departed. Then suddenly he cried in a loud voice calling upon those present to declare Jihad and fight the infidel government.

Immediately cries of *Allahu Akbar* echoed off the mountain sides and reverberated through the valleys. The men pounced on the security men who were thunderstruck and swiftly killed by the village men who seized their weapons. The men immediately went down to the police center, destroying it and killing the officers and soldiers. They seized the weapons and ammunition they found there and liberated the prisoners inside.

What happened in Zadran was repeated in dozens of places in the mountains and plains, in the cities and villages at the hands of men who had gained control of themselves and recovered after two days from the shock of insane violence practiced by the new regime. But the Afghan army was composed of 80,000 soldiers armed with the latest Soviet weaponry. Its leadership of “revolutionary comrades” assumed responsibility for opposing this “counter-revolution”. Columns of armored vehicles began to push towards mutinous villages and wiped them from existence, as bomber aircraft leveled the mountains with hundreds of tons of bombs. How swiftly had the “revolutionary violence” evolved from simple arrests according to previously prepared lists to punitive military operations to confront a campaign of guerrilla warfare involving martyrdom squads.

The year of the “revolution” had not ended before the army officers and party cadre were searching for a solution to the problem that they began, but could not finish or even control.